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Leza L Olson 11/01/2006 02:25:29 PM From DB/Inbox: Leza L Olson

Cable
Text:

S E C R E T NOFORN TEL AVIV 04349

SIPDIS
CXTela:

ACTION: POL
INFO: IPSC PD RSO CONS IMO RES ECON DCM DAO AMB AID
ADM

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:RHJONES
DRAFTED: POL:MCKEAYS
CLEARED: A/DCM:HFINN, POL/C:MJSIEVERS, DAO:PJD, POL/RES:JF, CG:JW, US

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7334
INFO RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 4902

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 004349

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/13/2031
TAGS: [PINR](#) [PBTS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GZ](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: (S/NF) PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI SECURITY
COOPERATION (C-NE6-01638)

REF: STATE 169657

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reason: 1.4 (b) (d).

¶1. (S/NF) In response to reftel, embassy submits the following answers to questions posed in reftel. These answers were formulated with contributions from SIHO, DAO Tel Aviv, ConGen Jerusalem, and the U.S. Security Coordinator's office.

¶2. (S/NF) The answers below correspond to the questions posed in reftel.

¶A. (S/NF) There is limited cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security services. This is mainly as a result of long-standing tensions between Palestinians and Israelis. None of the District Coordinating Offices (DCOs) or District Coordinating Liaisons (DCLs) appear to be jointly manned. The Israeli security services have different levels of contact with the District Coordinating Offices (DCOs) depending on the issue, but the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) circumvent the DCOs and communicate directly with the Palestinian people in the West Bank. Representatives from the Israeli Security Agency (ISA, also known as the Shin Bet or Shabak) meet routinely with representatives from the Mukabarat (the Palestinian intelligence service) and the Preventive Security Organization (PSO) on specific security-related issues. There are indications that threat information is shared, including information on imminent suicide attacks, and information on Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas affiliates. How the Palestinians respond varies according to the crisis of the moment. In general, Israeli security officers display favorable attitudes towards senior Palestinian security officials like Rashid Abu Shabak (the Director General for Internal Security, and the previous chief of the Gaza PSO) and Tawfik Trawi (the acting commander

of the Mukabarat's General Intelligence Organization). The ISA also views West Bank PSO commander Ziad Hib-al-Rih as cooperative. The IDF tends to have a lower opinion of Palestinian security organs across the board. Israeli security officials complain about the extent to which their Palestinian counterparts act against terror suspects in response to tips and information. The Israelis seek greater action on the part of the Palestinian security services to apprehend suspected terrorists based on intelligence provided to them. The Palestinian security services seek greater intelligence sharing from their Israeli counterparts, and for their part complain that the Israelis do not provide enough specific information to act upon.

1) (S/NF) There is limited cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian security services. Occasionally, Shin Bet liaises on a behind-the-scenes basis with the Preventive Security Organization, which falls under the authority of Director General for Internal Security Rashid Abu Shabak. Shin Bet also informally liaises with the Mukabarat, which is directly under Palestinian President Abbas. The Israelis cooperate with and directly assist the Presidential Guard in motorcade operations, based on Israel's interest in safeguarding PA President Abbas. Post does not believe that there are contacts between the Palestinian civil police and the Israeli National Police (INP), but the INP is visible in parts of the West Bank.

2) (S/NF) Liaison and functional representatives from both sides continue to have contact with their counterparts.

3) (S/NF) During meetings, which are sensitive and closely held, representatives from both sides discuss specific security information. The Palestinians pose various requests to the Israelis and vice versa. (NOTE: More detailed information about these requests can be found in reports in intel channels. END NOTE.)

4) (S/NF) Israeli and Palestinian counterparts may meet several times per month or on a case-by-case basis. Meetings occur both at the senior and mid-level ranks.

5) (S/NF) Meetings usually take place in Jericho or Jerusalem. The Israelis help their counterparts get past checkpoints when necessary. Several senior Palestinians have VIP status, but find it less problematic when they coordinate with the Israelis.

6) (S/NF) There are few coordinated operations against a limited number of targets. Expectations and underlying mistrust on both sides render cooperation difficult. The Israelis are cautious when dealing with the Palestinians, and for their part, the Palestinians are careful not to be seen as collaborating with Israel. The second Intifada, the long-standing war on terror, and Hamas's January 2006 election victory all contribute to continued distrust and skepticism, yet at the same time, the Hamas victory has aligned to a greater degree the interests and objectives of the Israelis and Fatah-affiliated security services against Hamas.

7) (S/NF) Israeli and Palestinian security agency representatives who have contact with one another have developed a degree of respect on a personal level. After the January 2006 elections in which Hamas gained political clout, the frame of reference for the Israelis seemed to change as they began to look at the Fatah-loyal Palestinians as allies against Hamas. This has not, however, translated into any change in perception by Israeli security officials towards their Palestinian counterparts. If the Shin Bet were to rank order the Palestinian security services, it would place the Mukabarat at the top of the list, followed by the PSO, the Presidential Guard, the Palestinian police, and the National Security Force (NSF). The Israelis are concerned that Palestinian security services may be penetrated to some extent by Hamas, which might compromise any further development in cooperation.

8) (S/NF) Hamas's January 2006 election victory spurred a different frame of reference for the Israelis. Israel's official policy now is to not meet with PA officials, aside from the President and his representatives. Post's overall assessment is that cooperation is currently limited and will not expand to its full potential until greater progress is achieved in the peace process at the political level. Israel is inclined to help the U.S. Security Coordinator assist the Presidential Guard to a certain extent, so that it can protect President Abbas.

9) (S/NF) There is no longer any formal mechanism for contacts or coordination between the IDF and Palestinian DCO. Experiences from recent hostage situations and evacuations from Gaza indicate that there is minimal contact between the IDF and the Palestinians, and that any such contacts are informal or personal. They are generally limited to resolving specific issues.

10) (S/NF) Post is unaware of any regular dealings between MATAK and the Palestinian security services.

13. (S/NF) In addition to the information that DAO Tel Aviv has contributed in the above assessment, DAO Tel Aviv believes -- based on its close relationship with the IDF and military intelligence sources -- that the Israeli military does not cooperate with the Palestinian security services, or utilize the DCOs or DCLs in the execution of its duties in the West Bank. DAO Tel Aviv's assessment is that the Israeli military has a very low regard for the Palestinian security services, and that cooperation between IDF representatives and Palestinian security officials is unlikely to develop absent significant progress in the peace process.

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JONES